THE VANITY, Mischief and Danger Of Continuing CEREMONIES IN THE Worship of God.

Humbly Proposed to the

Present Convocation.

By *P. M.* A Minister of the Church of *England.*

Philip. 4. 5. *Let your Moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.*

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THE

Publisher to the Reader.

THeſe Papers were ſent hither by a Reverend Divine of the Church of England, that reſides in the Country. The Reader will eaſily perceive by the peruſal of 'em, that all our Clergy there, are not of the ſame mind with thoſe whom Vox Cleri repreſents. And had the ſeveral Dioceſes ſent us up Proctors for the Clergy of the ſame Excellent Principles, and Healing Temper with this Author, to have ſeconded our Reverend Biſhops in thoſe good diſpoſitions to Accommodation, which they ſeem to have brought with 'em, we might have had ſome better hopes of ſeeing an happy End put to thoſe ſad Diviſions which have ſo long ſullied the Honour, and weakned the Intereſt of the Proteſtant Religion amongſt us. But yet we would not willingly deſpair of the Lower Houſe of Convocation. We know not but the opportunity

and leisure which this short Interval gives 'em for converse, and calmer Thoughts, may do something to allay their Heats, and mellow their Judgments, and sweeten their Humour against the next Meeting. *And the little peevishness, wherewith I doubt not some of the Clergy that continue disaffected to the present Government, have leaven'd 'em, may soon wear off when they come to understand things better But if notwithstanding the fair Advantages put into our hands to lay the Foundation of a Lasting* Union *by reforming Abuses, and removing the Obstacles of it, if notwithstanding all the weighty Arguments that should at this time urge us to it, we are deaf to all seasonable Counsels of Peace, what can we expect but that Almighty God will bring us into new Dangers, to cement our Affections, and send our* Enemies *to be our* Peace-makers ?

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The Vanity, Mischief and Danger of continuing Ceremonies in the Worship of God.

To the Reverend Clergy of the Church of *England.*

My Reverend Fathers and Brethren;

IT is the wonder and grief of all good English Protestants, that such an unaccountable frenzy should possess and hurry some hot Clergy men amongst us, with a blind zeal against the good Proposals of Peace prepared by the Kings Commissioners in the *Jerusalem* Chamber. They make a tragical outcry as if the Church were to be undone, when there is no danger of parting with any thing but what may well be spared; nothing is intended but the removal of the brambles that have rent and torn her. Some do think that amongst the invisible inhabitants of the world there are ludicrous Spirits of an inferiour rank, and that these play the little tricks in disturbed houses. Some such ludicrous Spirits act these men, who have a long time haunted and vexed the Church (the house of God) with the Pother they have made for *Annis* and *Cummin*, and have made little reckoning of weightier matters. For trifles they labour all they can to heighten amongst people an unseasonable and dangerous sourness and peevishness. When a Popish Prince ascended the Throne, they endeavoured to make us believe that we were happy, that *James* the Just never broke his word, and now they set all their creatures on work, to inflame people with animosities and jealousies of the Churches danger; when our gracious *Josiah* labours to inlarge the interest, and to increase the beauty and glory of our Church. And this he doth in such a method, as may expiate former miscarriages, and deliver us from the reproach of the late wasting persecutions.

First, He gives a Commission to some of our Reverend Fathers and Divines to prepare things for peace; then he calls a Convocation to consider those things, and recommend them to the Parliament. He puts it in our own power, in a great measure,

to heal the great breaches, and repair the lamentable ruins and desolations, that have been made by some amongst us.

To be a little more particular, because this matter lays the greatest difficulties in our way of Peace, and renders our present case most perplexed, Let all our Reverend, Pious and Learned Churchmen weigh well the manifold considerations that oblige them by all means to endeavour, that the evil temper of some amongst us may not prevail. I. The Honour of the Clergy is concerned. II. It is a vain thing to attempt the continuance of Ceremonies. III. It is unreasonable. IV. The manifold mischiefs of impositions. V. Our danger present and future.

I. I. The honour of the Clergy is concerned. Farewel to the reputation and honour of the Clergy of the Church of *England*, if Ceremonies are now continued in the Worship of God. In the time of our affliction we did talk of Prayers and Tears, as the only weapons of Christians; this will be lookt upon as hypocritical canting, if we labour to continue the instruments of persecution. We have promised to come to a temper towards Dissenters; how infamous shall we be if we violate a promise so publickly given when under the rod? We have lost many opportunities of Peace; we have now a Glorious opportunity, and many engagements upon us to improve it. 'Shall 'an evil Spirit still prevail among us to the defeating all the de-'signs of Providence, and the crossing of all attempts for Peace 'and Union? So that neither the errour that all men seemed to 'confess, nor the promises, which were then generally made, nei-'ther our late distress, nor our present dangers can bring us to a 'sound mind, or to a calm temper, *that in this our day we may know 'the things that belong to our Peace.*

Bishop Burnets *Exhortation to Peace and Union*, Pag. 12.

There have been condescensions towards Papists, as in the Litany and the 28th Article; and shall we be stiff only towards those of our own Communion, who have subscribed the Doctrine of our Church? It will be thought that we bear a secret dislike to pious Protestants, if we can yield to the enemies of our Religion, and not to them. We shall load our selves with the crime of ingratitude towards Christ our Soveraign, and Dissenters. We thank God for our Redemption by Jesus Christ, believing that he hath bought us with his blood; and shall we continue stumbling blocks to keep many pious Pastors from feeding his Lambs

for

for whom he laid down his life? Our gracious Soveraign hath been indefatigable in his labours for our deliverance from Popery and Arbitrary power; he hath saved our Church and State, our Religion, Laws, Liberties, Estates and our lives; and how great will be our ingratitude and folly, if we continue obstinate for the retaining those things, that let in upon us the dangers from which we are so lately delivered, and do now hinder his Majesties peaceable Government, and obstruct his acting according to his glorious ambition, that designs chiefly the relief of the oppressed, and the advancement of the Protestant Interest at home and abroad? Let it not give offence, if I say that we shall be ingrateful towards Dissenters. They were steady for the preservation of the Church of *England* in the day of our distress, against the taking away of the Test and the Penal Laws by which they had smarted so much. There were more of our own Communion, than of theirs, that revolted from us and turned against the Laws. And now they have an Indulgence by Law, they are contented with the liberty of serving God according to their conscience; and trouble not the Government with Petitions for more, neither have they given any indication of envying us the honours and Profits we enjoy. How shall we give an account to God and Man for all the evils that may be occasioned by our obstinacy? Mankind may justly abhor us, if we perversly shake the foundations of the Peace and Happiness of our Countrey for things of no value. The word Schism hath been a long time by some of us flung about at random; but now people will know on whom to charge it. The meetings of the Dissenters are as legal as ours. None are by the Law of God or man obliged to hold Communion with us upon the present terms. If we by continuing them drive people from us, the Schism will lodge at our doors, and we shall be the Schismaticks. They that for Rites labour to keep up our animosities, justify the late violences, and make themselves guilty of all the Persecutions of former times. Men may be still Persecutors, tho' they are not able to persecute any longer, according to our Saviours charging the guilt of intended sins on those who never acted them. And God may charge upon them all the blood that hath been shed from the foundation of the World, from the blood of *Abel* unto the blood of those glorious champions for our Religion and Laws, *Essex*, *Russel*, *Sidney*.

Bishop Burnets *Exhortation to Peace and Union*, Pag. 27.

Sidney, Cornish, &c. Verily I say unto you it shall be required of this Generation, Luk. 11. 51. They who approved of and rejoiced in the murder of these men of honour, may have their hands full of blood in the sight of God.

II. It is a vain thing to attempt the continuance of Ceremonies. Wise men when they are earnest in the prosecution of any affair, aim at some end that may recompence their diligence. Now it is exceeding difficult to find out what end people propose to themselves in being zealous for the keeping up of these things. When a comprehension was endeavoured by that incomparable Triumvirate of our Church, the Lord Keeper *Bridgman*, the Lord Chief Justice *Hales*, and Bishop *Wilkins*, it was objected the concessions would tempt those of our own Communion to forsake us and go over to the Church of *Rome*. Whatever strength there was in that Objection then, it signifies little now, Popery having appear'd since in its true colours. We need not fear the losing of any, except them, who corrupted the Victuals, and put Garbage into the Vessels of Beer for the Navy, who hindred the relief of *Derry* till many scores died for want, and are the cause that no more of *Ireland* is recovered, who by manifold Treacheries have obstructed affairs of greatest moment in *England* and *Scotland*. We may also lose some of the *Devil Tavern* club; it were better for us to be rid of them than to be betrayed by them in Protestant vizors. As for the debauches, if many or all of them depart from us, the loss will not be so great as the mischief they do us by pretending to be of our Communion. Let them declare themselves Fanaticks, Papists, any thing, rather than members of the Church of *England*. It would perhaps be more desireable to live in a mean, low, afflicted condition without such Company, than to govern the World with it. There is great danger now of losing multitudes to the Dissenters by the continuance of Ceremonies. Your coercive power is gone. I can heartily say with his Lordship Bishop *Burnet*; 'God be thanked for it, that there is an end put to all Persecution in matters of Conscience; and that the first and chief Right of Humane Nature of following the dictates of Conscience in the service of God, is secured to all men amongst us; and that we are freed, I hope, for ever, of all the remnants of the worst part of Popery that we had too long retained, I mean, the Spirit of Persecution.

II.

Dr. Sharps *Sermon before the Commons*, April 11. 1679.

Exhort to Peace and Union. p. 27.

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The Act of Indulgence sets all men at liberty, and it comes not long after a very fierce Persecution, which will increase the number of Dissenters more than ever. The barbarity of that Persecution; the wickedness of the instruments, it being carried on by perjur'd Informers, and debauched Juries; the dangerous design of it, to fright the Dissenters, or by Excommunication to disable them from assisting the sober party of our Church in choosing good Members of Parliament, and honest Officers in *London* and other Corporations, for the Preservation of our Religion and Laws: these and other aggravations of that cruel storm with the continuance of Ceremonies that then armed furies against us and our brethren, will breed a mighty prejudice in people against us, as a most odious and contemptible generation of men, if after so many miseries and confusions, we do for trifles, expose all the Interests of our Countrey into the greatest dangers imaginable.

We can impose these things upon none but the Ministers and their Clarks. An unseasonable peevishness for them, will make many detest our foolish superstition, and forsake our Assemblies. There is no keeping up their honour, except we blind the people, which is now impossible. For if we neglect Preaching seriously, the Dissenters will do it for us, and in 7 years their Preachers may be increased ten to one for what they are now. Our own Clergy who have a Zeal for the glory of God and the good of Souls, cannot avoid promoting the work. Many of them submit not to Ceremonies out of choice, but as a burden from which they would gladly be delivered. If they did speak out, it would be as *Erasmus* did of wealth: *non magis ambio opes quàm elumbis equus graves sarcinas*: They are to them but as the heavy load on the Carriers staggering Horse. As Knowledge increaseth, Zeal for Ceremonies will grow more and more ridiculous.

It is the hope of many good and learned men, that the time is at hand, when God will deliver his Church for ever from the darkness of the Kingdom of Antichrist; and that the Nations will cast away all things that have been instruments of advancing his tyranny and superstition. Surely that glorious day will open mens eyes. I have faith to believe that *England* will not be blind, when other nations see. 'God will one day convince men that the Union of the Church lies more in the Unity of Faith and Affection

Dr. Stilling. Irn. p. 121.

'Affection than in the Uniformity of doubtful Rites and Ceremonies.

It is the condescension of the Government, that the desired Union is proposed to the Clergy, the Legislative Power may do it without us. The Lords, the Knights of the Shires and the Burgesses, know who are fit in their several Counties to be Counsellors of Peace, and Healers of our Breaches, and if we are unwilling to be Peace-makers, they may (if they please) make a Law that the Members of both Houses shall in their several Counties choose three or four Divines to sit in Convocation to offer unto them what may settle the peace of our Church. In the act of Indulgence, the King, Lords and Commons have acted like good Pastors that are careful of the Flock. I wish our Convocation follow their good example. If we will not do our parts, we have no reason to think that the Nobles and Gentlemen will sacrifice all their Interests to our fondness of continuing snares among the people. If a combustion should happen we shall in the issue lose more than is now desired. A Ceremonial War hath been once fatal to Clergy-men, another will strike home.

The Church would lose nothing tho all its Ceremonies were laid aside. The beauty and excellency of it, is not at all advanc'd by a luggage of Impositions. They are no more an Ornament to the Church, than the Chains of a Galley or Prison, are Ornaments to the poor man that is laden with them. The Church is the spouse of Christ, her Glory consists in a conformity to him her Head and Bridegroom, in holiness and love; and not in such

Rev. 17. 1, 2. geere, as is common to the *great Whore who hath made the inhabitants* of the earth drunk with the wine of her fornication.

Plea for Moderation, P. 11, 12. 'I dare affirm (saith Mr. *Boyle*) that if the Rites and Ceremonies 'now in use in the Church of *England*, should be altered, some 'changed, and some laid wholly aside, by the same authority 'which did at first enjoyn them, the Church of *England* would still 'be as impregnable a Bulwark against Popery, as now she is. 'And I am fully satisfied there is no man will deny this, unless 'he be either a real Papist, or an ignorant superstitious fool.

After all the endeavours of our Bigots, neither these things nor they that labour to support them, will ever be valued by them that are seriously pious in our own Communion. All the art and power in the world cannot make trifles in the Worship

of

of God seem matters of importance to them that relish Heavenly things. What Trumpery are Habits, various Gestures and Postures to a man that is swallowed up in the contemplation of the infinite Majesty of the Glorious God? or that is lost in the ravishing admiration of his goodness and love? or that is sunk into the lowest abasements and self-abhorrence for his sins? Such a soul may be loaded with human Inventions, but he can never look upon them as ornaments or helps unto devotion. On the contrary, he may count himself mocked, and reckon those imposed fooleries no better than the fools caps and coats which Persecutors did put on the Saints of God, when they led them to the stake to be sacrificed in the flames. They may be valued by formal dead Christians; but the spiritually minded will look on them as toys fit only to adorn Hypocrites.

III. It is unreasonable to continue Ceremonies. After all that the Wisdom and Power of Imposers can do, the judgments of men will differ. It is as possible to make their Hair all of one Colour, their Bodies of the same Proportion, their Faces all alike, as their Judgments to be the same in Rites and Ceremonies. Instead of obtaining Uniformity by Impositions they break the Unity of the Spirit, and crumble the Church into Parties and Sects. 'Which may seem strange (saith Dr. *Stillingfleet*) the things that *Irin.* Pag. 38. 'men can least bear with one another in, are matters of Liberty; 'and those things men have divided most upon, have been matters of Uniformity; and wherein they have differed most have 'been pretended things of Indifferency. Nothing but what is necessary should be imposed as Terms of Communion.

'What possible reason can be given why such things should not *Ib. Prf.* 8. 'be sufficient for Communion with a Church which are sufficient 'for Salvation; and certainly those things are sufficient for that 'which are laid down as the necessary duties of Christianity by 'our Lord and Saviour in his Word.

'The practice of the Reformers of the Church from Popery is a *Ib.* Pag. 121. 122. 'good pattern for us to follow. Such was the prudence and temper of the French Churches, in the composing their publick 'Forms of Prayer, that they were so far from inserting any thing 'controversial into them, that the Papists themselves would use 'them, and inserted them into their own Prayer-book. The same 'temper was used by our Reformers in the composing our Litur-

'gy, in reference to the Papists, to whom they had then an especial eye, &c. And certainly those holy men, who did seek by any means to draw in others, at such a distance from their principles as the Papists were, did never intend by what they did for that end, to exclude any tender consciences from their Communion. That which they laid as a bait for them, was never intended by them as a hook for those of their own profession. But the same reason which at that time made them yield so far to them, would now have perswaded them to alter and lay aside those things which yield matter of offence to any of the same profession with themselves. So far Dr. *Still.*

Dr. Burnets *Letters*, Pag. 46. &c.

'By the letters, (he means of our reformers to *Bullinger*.) of which I read the Originals, it appears that the Bishops preserved the ancient Habits rather in compliance with the Queens inclinations than out of any liking they had to them; So far were they from liking them, that they plainly expresst their dislike of them. *Jewel* in a Let. *Feb.* 8. 1566. wishes that the Vestments together with all the other remnants of Popery might be thrown both out of their Churches, and out of the minds of the people, and laments the Queens fixedness to them: So that she would suffer no change to be made. And *Jan.* 1566. *Sands* writes to the same purpose. *Contenditur de vestibus Papisticis utendis vel non utendis; dabit deus his quoque finem.* Horn *Jul.* 16. 1565. writes of the Act concerning Habits with great regret, and expresses some hopes that it might be repealed, next Session of Parliament, if the Popish party did not hinder it, and he seems to stand in doubt whether he should conform himself to it or not, upon which he desires *Bullinger*'s advice. And in many letters wrote on the Subject it is asserted, that both *Cranmer* and *Ridley* intended to procure an Act for abolishing the Habits, *&c. Grindal Aug.* 27. 1566. Writes that all the Bishops who had been beyond Sea, had at their return dealt with the Queen to let the matter of the Habits fall: But she was so prepossessed, that tho they had all endeavoured to divert her from prosecuting the matter, she continued still inflexible. This had made them resolve to submit to the Laws, and to wait for a fit opportunity to reverse them. *Cox* in one of his Letters, laments the aversion that they found in the Parliament to all the propositions that were made for the reformation of abuses.

It

It seems that these things were then established by Parliament against the minds of the Clergy; they may now by the same Authority be taken away, though some among us are against it, and care as little for the Peace and Prosperity of the Church, as the Harlot for the Child which she would have divided alive. They are such Pastors, as she was a Mother.

The example of the Primitive Church will condemn our stiffness for Indifferent things. 'Certainly the Primitive Church that did not charge mens Faith with such a load of Articles, as now in these latter Ages men are charged with, would much less burden men with imposing doubtful practices upon them as the Ground of Church Communion. There is nothing the Primitive Church deserves greater imitation by us in, than that admirable temper, moderation and condescension which was used in it, towards all the members of it. It was never thought worth the while to make any standing Laws for Rites and Customs that had no other Original but Tradition, much less to suspend men from Communion for not observing them. This admirable temper in the Primitive Church might be largely cleared from that liberty they allowed freely to Dissenters from them in matters of Practice and Opinion: As might be cleared from *Cyprian*, *Austin*, *Jerom*, &c.' *Dr. Stillingfleets Iren. Pag. 122, 68.* *Ib. Pref. Pag. 10, 11.*

'Were there in the Primitive times many hundreds of men duly qualified for the Ministry, kept out of the Church for their Nonconformity to some Opinions, Forms, and Ceremonies, of the truth or lawfulness whereof, the Dissenters were wholly dissatisfied, and which the Imposers judged to be but things in themselves indifferent?' *Mr. Corbet of Church-Unity, Pag. 49.*

The Apostles did not at all favour the imposing humour. The Holy Ghost and the Apostles were only for requiring necessary things: *It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things.* How strangely hath the Christian World been since altered? It hath seemed good to men to impose unnecessary things as terms of Communion: But it doth nowhere appear that this practice seemeth good to the Holy Ghost. The whole course of Scripture is contrary hereunto. *Let every man be fully perswaded in his own mind.* This is not considered; for doubting consciences are not at all relieved, they must conform or else be excluded from Communion with our Church *Acts 15. 28.* *Rom. 14. 5.*

Church in the Ordinances of Christ. *No man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. Follow after things which make for Peace and things wherewith one may edify another.* He that doubteth is damned. How little have souls been valued by Imposers? *When ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak consciences, ye sin against Christ.* Imposers do not only wound the Consciences of the weak, but they offend their head Jesus Christ, who is also the Judge of the World and takes notice of the injuries done to his flock. *Feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost, but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them.* Paul was a great Governour in the Church, yet he was so far from using his Authority to the distress of conscience, that rather than offend a weak brother, he would abridge himself of his liberty as a private Christian. *Wherefore if meat make my Brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the World standeth, lest I make my Brother to offend.* We have little reason to hope for this blessed temper amongst us, while men seek *their own, and not the things of Jesus Christ.*

Rom. 14. 13. 19. 23.

1 Cor. 8. 12.

Ezek. 34. 3, 4.

1 Cor. 8. 13.

Phil. 2. 21.

IV. The manifold mischiefs of these impositions. No man can shew any good they have done, except it be good to maintain a corrupt party in Church and State, to the excluding a Pious, Sober, Peaceable, Diligent and Powerful Interest, that to a man would stand by the King, and venture all they concern him and the Protestant Religion, while some, that have prophaned the Sacrament for an Office, have by their manifold treacheries sacrificed many hundred lives, and hugely hindred his Majesties affairs. The Fabulous evils of *Pandora's* box, come unspeakably short in number of the real mischiefs from Impositions. 'Without all controversy the main inlet of all the distractions, Confusions and Divisions in the Christian World, hath been by adding other conditions of Church Communion than Christ hath made.

IV.

Dr. Stillingfleets *Iren. Prof.* 9.

If any man of common sense will but open his eyes and consider, he may see plainly enough, that all the publick miseries of mankind in Christendom, from the exorbitances of Popes and the violences of Tyrants owe their Original to the Spirit of Imposition in matters of Worship. For if people were well instructed in the true knowledge of God and their Duty to their Neighbour,

bour, and were not muffled in ignorance to maintain the Pride and Lazineſs of Churchmen, they would not ſo readily ſerve the Ambition of Princes, in invading the Rights of their Subjects at home, and laying waſte the Dominions of their Neighbours abroad. The miſchiefs I am ſpeaking of, are innumerable, ſome of them are reduceable to theſe ſix heads. I. Miſchiefs to the Church. II. To the State. III. To Souls. IV. To Piety. V. Miſchiefs in promoting a mighty increaſe of Prophaneneſs and all kind of wickedneſs. VI. Hindering a World of good.

I. Miſchiefs to the Church. Zeal for mens devices begets in people a ſtrange levity of mind, makes them ſuch triflers in Religion, that they diſregard the great intereſts of God and his Church in the World: They are not ſenſible of the deſolations of Gods Churches in *France*, *Orange*, *Piedmont*, the Palatinate, *Ireland*, *&c.* Of the judgments of God that threaten other Churches, of the plagues that may hang over our heads to chaſtiſe us for our crying abominations. What unthinking creatures are theſe? Yet they are good Sons of the Church, zealous for its Ceremonies, not a pin muſt be pull'd out, tho innumerable tender Conſciences are wounded by them. They cry the Church of *England*, the Church of *England*, and are not mindful of the common danger from the Roman Gulf, that gapes to ſwallow down all. Such vanity of mind doth zeal for trifles infect men with.

I.

The zealots for theſe things, did ſo far labour againſt the preſervation of our Religion, when the exclusion of a Popiſh Succeſſor was endeavoured, that I have often heard good men ſay, that if Popery came in, it would enter at the Church door. God be prais'd, they were deceived, but it is no thanks to theſe obſtinate ſticklers, who brought the Church to the very brink of ruin, and now raiſe a clamour of its danger, whenever any thing that has been endeavoured muſt prove its ſtength as well as its glory; if we are ſo happy as to weigh all in even Ballances. Churches will thrive better with the naked ſimplicity of the Goſpel, than the mock decency of Theatrical Ornaments, which are good for nothing but to maintain Formality, Diſſention, Pride and Tyranny. The glory of the Church conſiſts in a lively Faith, and ſincere love of the members of it, theſe are not advanced, but hindred by impoſing as Terms of Communion little things,

Biſhop Burners Exhortation to Peace and Union, Pag. 14.

things, the lawfulness of which is doubted by many good Christians. But when only necessaries are required, the Peace and Unity of the faithful is not in great danger, tho some dissent. For such things will be more easily known and submitted to by the greatest number of sincere Christians. 'When necessary things 'are only injoyned, their weight and truth will soon be known, 'and owned of all honest minds, or at least are most likely so to 'be; and much sooner and easier than the weight, and truth of 'little doubtful things; and by this means they would more easi-'ly move with joint consent in one godly order, the matters of 'their difference being before hand taken out of the way.

Mr. Corbets Kingdom of God. Pag. 74.

Impositions do narrow and weaken the foundation of a Church. They are means of excluding multitudes of pious, peaceable and useful members from the Communion of it. The making of unnecessary terms of Communion, which to doubting consciences are unlawful, weakens the interest of true piety in the Church, by keeping out abundance of sincere Christians. A corrupt party may by this means be only taken into her bosom, and advanced to high power, all the rest rejected, if not persecuted. The late times gave us a deplorable instance hereof: for tho there was a sober party in the Church, yet it could do nothing against a malignant Faction that had gotten all under foot; First the Dissenters, then the sober Conformists, laboured under a load of reproaches and misrepresentations, as disaffected to the Government. All being grasp't by such hands, the issue was like to be the ruine of Christianity among us, if God had not been merciful to the Church in so great a danger. The interest of a Church should be as large and wide as is consistent with the terms of the Gospel: None that profess Christianity, and live unblameably should be excluded.

The Scripture is our only guide of Unity. Uniformity is deformity and confusion, when men appoint other terms of Ministerial Service, and Church Communion, than are prescribed in Gods Word. The imposers are guilty of the Rents and Schisms caused by such impositions. 'Where inventions false or useless 'are made the necessary Symbols of Religion, there a Sectarian In-'terest bears Sway, and the gaining of the Secular Power will not 'wipe off the blot of such a party. The name of Sectary may fit 'proud Usurpers as well as blind Zealots. The removal of Impositions

Corbets Kingdom of God. Pag. 88.

tions may be a means to extinguish Schism, and to prevent it for ever, or at least to free the Fathers of the Church from the imputation of it. 'To load our publick Forms, with private fancies upon which we differ, is the most Soveraign way to perpetuate Schism to the worlds end. Prayer, Confession, thanksgiving, reading of the Scriptures in the plainest and simplest manner were matter enough to furnish out a sufficient Liturgy, tho nothing either of private opinion, or of Church Pomp, of Garments or prescribed Gestures, &c. did interpose it self. 'Were there a Spirit of mutual condescention (as in the Primitive Church) our breaches as to these things might be soon closed up, and the voice of Schism be heard amongst us no more. *Halls of Schism.* Pag. 8. *Dr.* Stillingfleets *Iren.* Pag. 122.

God, for the carnal state of Christians in the reformed Churches hath, let loose the last and sharpest Persecution from Antichrist upon them, by this severe Providence intending to deliver his Spiritual worshippers from the Tyranny of Superstitious Formalists, who by the desolations of other Churches are admonished to be wise, lest they bring some great evil upon their own heads. Gods work shall go on, whatever difficulties lie in the way; it may be delayed, but it shall not be defeated. The *Israelites* had a forty years prorogation of their happiness, the Rebels were all to die in the wilderness. The good things intended for the Church may be deferred till the removal of the carcases of the Scottish murmurers against our Royal *Moses*, and the blind Zealots who are unworthy to see the glory that is at hand. The Roman *Pharaoh* shall no more plant the Tabernacles of his Pallace between the seas in the glorious holy Mountain. There may be very humbling disappointments of the hopes of the faithful: God doth wisely suffer these variations in the Church, for the tryal of his Servants, and to shew the necessity of the continual influences of his holy Spirit to raise and keep up our Souls above the animal life.

II. Mischiefs to the State. Zeal for Ceremonies begets in men a contempt of publick Rights and Boundaries. When they dote so much upon vanities in worship as to inslave their Consciences, and to despise their Christian liberty, it is no wonder if they sell at any rate their own and others civil Rights and Priviledges. I had rather forget than take into the foul work such men have made in Juries, Elections, Corporations, &c. since the dissolution II.

of the *Oxford* Parliament. Add hereunto the late violences upon mens Bodies and Estates by unreasonable Prosecutions; Fining, Excommunicating, Imprisoning peaceable, diligent Christians, who desired to live according to Gods Word, and did nothing to the disturbance of the Government. Yet many are so far bewitched into a fondness for these remainders of our former slavery, that they had rather sacrifice all to Popery and Arbitrary Power, than quit a few trifles which for 130 years have been matters of contention and vexation in the Church, and do at this day shake the foundations of the Protestant Interest. 'It cannot 'but be looked on as a token of Gods severe displeasure against 'us, if any tho unreasonable Proposals between us and the Papists, 'should meet with such entertainment among many, and yet any 'fair offers of union and accommodation among our selves be so 'coldly embraced and entertained.

Dr. Stilling. *Iren.* p. 123.

In the late times, when our Parliaments struggled with Arbitrary Power for the preservation of our Religion and Laws, tho' the noble Peers spoke never so good reason in matters of the greatest importance, yet two or three Bishops always voted against them. They were then called the dead weight. If it be said, that they were over-awed by Soveraign Command; it is not so now. The hinderers of our happiness (our present sticklers for Ceremonies) have all the encouragement in the World from the King, Lords and Commons. The eyes of the people are upon us expecting that we should act like good Pastors, healing the breaches and labouring in our stations to secure the publick Peace. If we now disappoint the just expectations of wise and good men of all ranks, we may necessitate the Government to take other measures for the preservation of the Peace, and the satisfaction of an awakened people.

The good temper, wisdom, diligence, faithfulness and courage of Gods Servants have been useful to mankind. But a carnal Faction of Christians being hurried by a mad zeal for little things, have oppressed these benefactors, stained the glory of the Nation, beaten down the rents of lands, discouraged diligence, destroyed Trade, and brought the most illustrious Island in the World to a low state. Nothing can recover a languishing people, but the reviving of true Piety. 'Wherever it roots and 'spreads, it makes no small part of the prudence, courage, in-

Corbet. *Kingdom of God* p. 123.

'dustry

'duſtry and frugality, and by conſequence of the wealth and 'ſtrength of a Nation. There is no aggregation of men in the 'World wherein appears more of that which is good and profi- 'table to men, than is found where the influence of this profeſſi- 'on becomes predominant, whether in a Nation or Kingdom, or 'City, or Family.

'The ſpirit of this profeſſion being ſober, ſolid and ſerious, is 'happy in diſpoſing towards the attainment of much perfection pag. 145. 'in all profitable ſcience, and eſpecially toward that which is 'moſt excellent and uſeful in humane affairs, to wit, ſolid and deep 'judgment. In this reſpect the children of true Wiſdom ſtand 'upon the vantage ground, *&c.*

The continuance of Ceremonies may nurſe up a generation of Vipers to act over again the ſame cruelties, and to drive us back again into the miſeries and confuſions from which we are ſo lately delivered. If God for our ſins ſhould give us up into their hands, they will make ſure work, and leave nothing to be done by thoſe that come after them. A relapſe in the ſtate, is as dangerous as in the body natural.

III. Miſchief to Souls. For trifles there hath been exerciſed a mad tyranny over mens faculties. The Perſecutors would not ſuffer people to act like rational creatures: Tho in their conſciences they doubt of the lawfulneſs of mens devices in the Worſhip of God, yet they uſed all means to force them to a Conformity. 'It is the higheſt uſurpation to rob men of the Liberty 'of their judgments. A man hath not power over his own, 'much leſs can others have it. If every private perſon muſt 'judge what is lawful, and what not, which is commanded (as 'when all is ſaid, every man will be his own judge in this caſe, in 'things concerning his own welfare) then he is no further bound 'to obey than he judgeth the thing to be lawful which is com- 'manded. III. *Dr. Stilling. Iren.* page 118, 119.

What hindereth Governours from removing thoſe things, which they own to be in their own nature Indifferent? Is not the peace of weak Conſciences infinitely to be preferred before unneceſſary Impoſitions? *Bleſſed is he that conſidereth the Poor.* Pſal. 41. 1. Surely much more bleſſed are they, that compaſſionately conſider the burdens and oppreſſions of grieved ſouls. They that regard Conſcience in themſelves, will value the intereſts of Conſcience

in others. It is no commendation in Paſtors to imitate the *Egyptian* Task-maſters, who *made the lives* of Gods people *bitter through hard bondage; all the ſervice wherein they made them ſerve was with rigour.* The Miniſters of the Goſpel of peace, ſhould not be rigorous towards their people. *Thou ſhalt not rule over him with rigour, but ſhalt fear thy God.* By the Antitheſis it appears, that where the fear of God is, there will not be in Paſtors rigour and ſeverity towards their flocks for ſmall matters.

Exod. 1. 14.

Lev. 25. 43.

Chriſt will have us ſhew our love to him in feeding his Lambs; this muſt be done with fitting food: impoſitions are Briers and Thorns; our fierce Bigots would ſtill teach their people, as *Gideon* did the men of *Succoth, with Briers and Thorns.* This is much more eaſy to Loyterers than the drudgery of Preaching, which one called the Mechanical part of the Office of a Miniſter, ſaying, he would not much trouble himſelf with it. The neglect of this in many places, ſheweth, that there are more of his mind. What a zeal is there in many for ſhadows? And how are precious Souls careleſly left by them at random, when they thus deſpiſe and neglect the Preaching of the Goſpel, which is the power of God unto Salvation?

Judg. 8.

The little things impoſed are a means of depriving the Church of the ſervice of many uſeful Miniſters that are apt to teach, and would be glad to give the bread of life to thoſe Souls, that are by drones left in the broad way to deſtruction. The making unneceſſary terms of Miniſterial ſervice which Chriſt never injoin'd, is an Invaſion of his Kingly Office. Some have been zealous for Prerogative when it was heavier than the loins of all the Kings ſince the conqueſt; but they make light of uſurping the Rights of the King of Kings. Chriſt commands his Miniſters to Preach, and qualifies them for that ſervice: No, ſay ſome, they ſhall not Preach, except they will wear the ſurplice. He bids them baptize: No, they ſhall not, if they will not ſign with the Croſs. St. *Paul* ſaith, Woe is unto me if I Preach not the Goſpel, and Chriſt ſaith, Feed my Lambs: no, it is no matter, if you will not do it upon terms, deviſed by us. The want of theſe excluded Paſtors weakens the hands of thoſe pious Miniſters that do conform. The crying neceſſities of Souls will find work enough for us and them too; if every one of us had the zeal and abilities of the Apoſtle Paul. The humane meaſures for Miniſters may chance

chance to admit ſome bad men into the Church; and is very likely to ſhut out abundance of able Paſtors, whoſe Conſciences doubt of the lawfulneſs of complying with terms not injoined by Chriſt.

Inſtead of keeping out burning and ſhining lights, we had need trim ſome of our own, that give but a faint light, if any at all. We have ſome unſavoury Salt, it concerns us to remove it to its due place, and admit that which hath too long been kept out of doors, to the great diſſervice of God and the Church. If we will not ſee ſome diſorders that are among us and reform them; the members of both Houſes of Parliament ſee them in their ſeveral Counties, and there is hope that they will find a remedy. In the mean time the people ſee them, and there is in them ſuch a hunger after Gods Word, that in ſome dark neglected corners of the land, they go in great numbers to hear a Non-conformiſt, and are glad if he viſit them once a month. But above all God ſees what is amiſs amongſt us, and if we do not our duty, he will find a Beſom to cleanſe his houſe, *and make them contemptible and baſe before all the People, that have been partial in his Law.* Mat. 5 13. Iſa. 14. 23. Mal. 2. 9.

When I have pleaded with a Reverend Divine in the behalf of excluded Miniſters, and endeavoured to repreſent to him ſome of the manifold miſchiefs to Souls by our rigour in impoſing unneceſſary terms; I have been put off with an εὐσχημόνως, *Let all things be done decently.* Will the violent wreſting that Text in the defence of mens Inventions, cover the guilt of deſtroying innumerable Souls, one of which is worth more than the whole World, and their ruine may be for want of the labours of thoſe able Miniſters whom we exclude for toys? Is the blood of Chriſt and of Souls ſo vile, as to be ſet to Sale for Stubble and Straw? Theſe things would be moſt contemptible, if we had the ſame value for Souls that Chriſt had, when he counted the whole World too light to be put in the ballance againſt one Soul, and when he laid down his life to redeem us from the wrath to come. We may by our rigidneſs drive many from our Communion into the dark Sectarian paths, in which they may periſh: but how ſhall we repair the miſchief that we have done? Tho we pour from our Eyes Rivers of Tears, or from our Veins Seas of Blood, we can never recover one loſt ſoul. *The redemption of their Soul is precious, and it ceaſeth for ever.* 1 Cor. 14. 40. Mar. 8. 36. Pſal. 49. 8.

IV.

IV. Miſchief's to Piety. The moſt learned Divines and the wiſeſt States-men in the World are but bunglers when they take upon them to add unto Gods Worſhip what he hath not appointed. Human Inſtitutions are but like clouts with which Chips are dreſt up into Babies for Children to play with. With theſe inventions Heathens and Atheiſts are habited like Chriſtians for the ſervice of the Devil, to corrupt and deſtroy true Chriſtianity. The World hath a long time groaned under them, it is high time for people to be Wiſe. Mankind hath for many Ages been poſſeſt and tormented with a furious Spirit, the Devil of Impoſition, it will never be well till this Spirit is caſt out. Piety may now as well live and flouriſh without our ceremonies, as it did mount without them above Idolatry, and conquered the World. It may be raiſed unto a new life from its decay, cauſed by a long and heavy oppreſſion under a load of humane Inventions. True Piety hath been hid in Corners; remove ſtumbling-blocks, and it will come forth and appear in publick with all its beauty and glory.' Allowing a liberty for matters of Indifferency, and bearing 'with the weak who cannot bear things which others account lawful, we might indeed be reſtored to a primitive luſtre far ſooner, 'than by furbiſhing up ſome antiquated Ceremonies, which can 'derive their Pedegree no higher, than from ſome ancient Cuſtom 'and Tradition.

Dr. Stilling. *Iren.* Pag. 121.

Ceremonies in Worſhip corrupt peoples minds with vanity, make them light and trifling in the weighty concerns of God and their Souls. 'Pomp and Train of Ceremonies retained, will be 'apt to take up the heart of ſuch as are buſied in them, and cor-'rupt the worſhip of God, and make it a dead work and carnal 'ſervice, and ſo the Spirit and Power of Godlineſs will decay and 'die amongſt people by this means. Many think they have done much if they have exactly conformed to Rites and Ceremonies. Such are apt to forget the awe and dread they ſhould have in the Worſhip of the Divine Majeſty. They are ſo careful of outward Poſtures and Habits, that they mind not the bringing of their Souls unto God, in whoſe ſervice all the faculties ſhould be engaged. What are all the inventions of men to our converſe with an infinite glorious Spirit? We cannot approach unto him but with our Spirits. The uſe of Ceremonies tends to the oppreſſion of the life and power of Chriſtianity. They are like painted windows,

Corbets *Kingdom of God.* Pag. 103.

dows, which may make a gaudy ſhew, but they much leſſen the light; or like Garments clog'd with Snow or Ice, they may load a man, but not warm him. The uſe of them waſts ſincere Piety. The preſſing of them is the cramming of Chriſtians with Stubble and Straw, and will ſooner choke than nouriſh true Piety and Charity. 'They when multiplyed, ſtrangely eat out the Heart, 'Heat, Life and Vigour of Chriſtianity. The carnal part of the world is eaſily engaged for them againſt holineſs, and to ſuch a degree, that ſerious Piety hath been ſcorned and ſcoffed at, not only by the Mobile, but by higher ranks, not excepting the Tribe in the long robe, when engaged to be Advocates for Impoſitions; witneſs *Samuel Oxons* Books of Eccleſiaſt. Pol. and of Loyalty. The uſe of Ceremonies hath ſo blinded men that multitudes have been inraged with a mad ſpirit againſt the life of Religion. There hath been for a long time amongſt us, a bitter hatred of ſerious Chriſtians that endeavoured to be *pure in heart*; ſuch have been reproached with the name of Puritans. Piety hath been ſcorned, vilified and perſecuted under the notion of Puritaniſm.

D. Scilling. *Iren.* Pag. 67.

Mat. 5. 8.

'There is no doubt but this Church (tho its Government and 'conſtitution be ſo pure, Juſtifiable and conſonant to Apoſtoli-'cal Practice) would ſuffer very much, ſhould but the almoſt 'Ordinary Miſcarriages of a great number who pretend to the 'Clergy be expoſed to Publick View with an account of the en-'couragement they meet with, or at leaſt how free they are from 'Threats and Moleſtations; while others who live better Lives, 'and are more conſtant and diligent Preachers, and do expreſs on 'all occaſions more of that charity and forbearance towards all 'men which Chriſtianity doth ſo much commend and enforce, 'are frowned upon, and left open to the rage and fury of beſotted, 'frantick and debauched Bigots.

Mr. Bolde's *Sermon againſt Perſecution.* pag. 14. 15.

'With ſuch as theſe if any man preſs for Regeneration, Sancti-'fication and a Holy Life, he was to paſs heretofore for a Puritan; 'then, for a Round-head; now, for a damn'd Fanatick: Nor 'ſhall he eſcape this cenſure, tho never ſo great a Church-man, 'and do exactly conform to the Church, as now by Law eſta-'bliſhed; For 'tis Holineſs they hate more than Nonconformi-'ty.

Dr. Wallis *Sermons to the Univerſity on* John 3. 3. pag. 41.

The

The rage and cruelty of our furious Bigots, was lately grown bigger and taller than ever; they had quite trampled under foot the Diſſenters, and began a wild Cariere againſt Piety and Sobriety in their own Body; they ſpared neither Nobles, nor Gentlemen, nor Clergy: all good men in their communion had been ground to powder, if the aſcent of the late King to the Throne, had not put a ſtop to their madneſs. The Church may be improved in Piety by that ſtorm, but it is no thanks to thoſe furious debauchees. When God lets looſe evil men upon his Flock, it is not to gratifie their ravenous luſt, but to make his ſheep love his fold, and keep to the paſtures which he appoints them. Perſecutors are Gods ſcullions to ſcour his veſſels of Honour for the Kingdom of Glory.

The removal of Ceremonies will take away the vizour with which Formaliſts, Hypocrites, Wicked and Prophane men do cover themſelves. When Religion is ſtript of theſe things, and nothing injoyned but what is plainly commanded by God, they only will be counted Pious who live according to the Doctrine of the Goſpel: Drunkards, Swearers, Whoremongers and ſuch like will be known to be what they are, a meer herd of Bruits. The aim of Paſtors (it is hoped) will then be to promote a ſpiritual worſhip; that in all the duties of piety the hearts of the people may be engaged. The ſouls ſincere return and reſignation to God in every ſervice is the top-ſtone of holineſs. God being a Spirit, we cannot converſe with him but by our Spirits. 'To 'worſhip God in the ſpirit &c. as it is moſt agreeable to the nature 'of the Divine Majeſty, which is worſhipped, and beſt fitted to 'glorifie him as God indeed; ſo it is alſo moſt efficacious to make 'the worſhippers more knowing in Religion, more holy and heavenly in Spirit and Converſation, and every way more perfect 'in things pertaining to life and Godlineſs.

Corbet's *Kingdom of God*, pag. 21.

Miniſters will have ſomething elſe to do than to preach againſt Non-conformiſts: we may expect that their great deſign will then be to endeavour to promote the Glory of God, to convince men of a future ſtate, to advance holineſs, ſobriety, peace and uſeful diligence in the world. Theſe things will come home to the faculties of conſidering men, and they will think that their Teachers are in good earneſt, when they are Zealous for things wherein the intereſt of their own ſouls is concerned.

Biſhop

Bishop *Patrick* gives excellent advice to Ministers in two particulars. 'I. Let us be much in private prayer. Our time is short as well as other mens, and many times shorter, though our account be greater; therefore let us spend much time with God, as we endeavour to spend it all for him. Let not a croud of thoughts in our Studies, nor a croud of company, thrust God away from our Souls, but let them frequently retire unto him as the fountain of all light and good. Prayer before our studies is the Key to unlock the secrets of God, and prayer afterward is the turning of the Key to lock them safe into our hearts. Prayer sharpens our appetite after truth; and when we have found it, it sets an edge upon the truth, and makes it more cutting and penetrating into the heart. II. Let us look to our ends in our work. Without this our labour would be in vain. Let us believe our selves what we speak, and then we should mind the Glory of God, and not our selves. Alas! what is the applause of men when we are gone, but like a sound in a dead mans ear? And what is it when we are alive, but an empty breath that is lost sooner than got, and is got oftentimes by idleness sooner than taking pains? &c. Let the good of men therefore, and the Glory of God be the mark at which we aim: And the Lord in Heaven hear our Prayers, and bless our Preaching.' If all our Clergy by what Titles or Dignities soever distinguished did truly follow this advice, there would be no Zealots among us for Impositions, the destroyers of Piety and Charity.

Divint Arithmetick pag. 72. 73.

V. Mischiefs in promoting a mighty increase of prophaneness and all kind of wickedness. The Zealots for mens devices have little regarded what evils corrupted Church and State, if the honour of these toys was supported. They have been so mindful of maintaining these things, that by their neglect they have suffered (if not worse) a flood of prophaneness and other wickedness to break in upon us.

V.

I. Prophaneness in the outragious contempt of holy things. There is scarce any thing in Religion that hath escaped the scorn and reproach of blind Zealots: The Ordinance of Preaching, the Lords day, the Scripture, our Holy Religion, and Jesus Christ himself; all have been struck at.

I.

The Ordinance of Preaching. The constant, serious, diligent performing of this, would spread knowledge amongst the

people to the prejudice of humane Impositions in Divine Worship. They would see what light things they are in the service of God. Preaching hath therefore been struck at under pretence of promoting Prayer as the chief work of a Minister. Dr. *Holdsworth* takes notice of it, and on the contrary maintains at large this *Thesis*: *Prædicatio verbi Dei opus est & ordine primum, & maxime proprium, & longe præstantissimum, inter omnia Curæ Pastoralis exercitia; ad quod sua studia & animum, & se totum, & imprimis, & maxime, & sæpissime appellere debeat &c.* Yet some have been so fierce against preaching Gods Word, that Lectures have been diligently suppressed, Prayers have been much advanced above Preaching as that, which might be spared if the others were read. Let us hear another Dr. concerning this abuse, and the Practice of the Church in the primitive times: 'Men that were imployed in the 'Church then, did not consult for their Ease or Honour, and 'thought it not enough for them to sit still and bid others work, but 'they were of *Pauls* mind, *necessity was laid upon them, yea, wo was 'unto them if they Preached not the Gospel*. Publick Prayers were 'not then looked on as the more Principal end of Christian Assemblies than Preaching &c. Were the Apostles Commissioned by Christ to go Pray, or Preach? and what is it wherein the 'Ministers of the Gospel succeed the Apostles? Is it in the office of 'Praying, or Preaching? &c. Are Ministers in their Ordination 'sent forth to be readers of Publick Prayers, or to be dispensers of Gods Holy Word, &c. This is one of the unhappy consequences which follows mens judging of the service of God, rather by the Practices of the Church, when it came to enjoy ease 'and plenty, than by the ways and Practices of the first and purest 'Apostolical times, &c. People need as much instruction as ever, 'and so much the more in that they are apt to think now the 'name of Christians will carry them to Heaven, &c. Men must 'be beat off from more things which they are apt to trust to for 'Salvation now, than in those times: men could not think so 'much then, that diligence in Publick Assemblies, and attendance 'at Publick Prayers, was the main Religion. Few would profess Christianity in those times, but such as were resolved beforehand rather to let go their lives than their Profession: but 'the more Profess it now, without understanding the terms of 'Salvation by it; the greater necessity of Preaching to instruct 'men in it.

Prælect. Theolog. in Mat. 13. 52. Lect. 3. pag. 19.

Dr. Stilling. Iren. pag. 333.

1 Cor. 9. 16.

pag. 334.

pag. 335.

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The Lords day hath met with many and great Enemies among the Ritualists. This is a gracious Injunction and gift of infinite Wisdom and Goodness, necessary for us to rescue our Souls from Levity of mind, carnal affections and worldly cares, and to feed, nourish and strengthen them with Spiritual Meditations and Heavenly Joys. They that seriously endeavour to converse with God and their own Souls, know the truth hereof. But Formalists are ignorant of the Divine life, to them the Sabbath is a burden, they say, *When will it be gone?* Pleading some years since with a grave Ceremonious Don of our Church for the sanctifying of the Lords day, by spending it in Religious exercises, he was so far from understanding me, that his return was, Shall a man be a whole day on the rack? Such a mystery is the Spiritual life to a man that spends his Zeal on Rites and Ceremonies. To ease such animal men from the rack, a book for sports on the Lords day was injoined Ministers to read in the time of Divine Service. Here we may wonder at the Fantastical humour of a sort of men, they persecuted the people for working in their lawful callings on the festival days; and silenced conscientious Ministers for not reading a book for sports on Gods Day. It was pretended in that sportful book, that the superstitious observation of the Lords day, did render his Majesties Subjects unfit for his Service in the Wars. But what kind of Fighters those sportmongers on Gods day were, the event shewed not long after. *Did not the Lord remember them, and came it not into his mind?* The Lords day duly observed is a mighty instrument for the promoting the Life of Godliness in the Souls of Christians. The serious observation of this begets in people another Spirit than is in Christians of other Reformed Churches. They are much more above the carnal World, than most of them, and than any that light that day in our own. Amo. 8. 5. Jer. 44. 21.

The Scripture hath its share of contempt from Ceremonialists, of the truth hereof the Impositions of *Rome* are a full proof. We need not go so far: For other Imposers are guilty of the same in a lower degree, while they injoyn on Ministers and People terms of Communion not warranted by the Word of God. And this is the worse, because when Scripture is urged, foolish preciseness and impertinency hath been charged on them, that have pleaded against such unscriptural Impositions.

Our holy Religion hath been mightily exposed to the scorn of evil men, when they see pretenders to it spend all their zeal on little things. 'Force and Rigorous Impositions, make men suspect 'the weight of the thing it self, when such force is used to make 'it enter.' When people are very earnest for trifles, as if the whole weight of Religion depended on them, some may be tempted to suspect that all is but a cheat, a trick of cunning Churchmen to form people to serve their purposes; especially, when one that hath written books for Conformity shall say, that is the best Body of Divinity, that enables a man to keep a Coach and six Horses.

Dr. Stilling. *Iren. Prof.* pag. 11.

Our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who hath suffered so much for sinners, suffers again by the mockery of Ceremonies without the heart. All the pomp of them is to 'him a Crown of Thorns,' if persecutors for them wound the weak consciences of his members. One may conform to the use of the transient sign of the Cross, and scoff at the knowledge of Christ; a book so called, ridicules the Title it bears. Another is much more bold, takes upon him to dethrone the King of Kings, and set him at the foot-stool of Crowned dust. 'It is but a crude expression (not to 'call it prophane, because it is so common by customary mistake) 'to affirm that Kings are Supream Governours under Christ. 'They are and ever were so under God, but so as to be Superiour to Christ, as Christ is head of his Church within their Dominions.'

Parker of *Religion and Loyalty* Par. 1. Pag. 28, 29. Lon. 1684.

II. II. Mischiefs in promoting an increase of all kind of wickedness. The most immoral men, if they did pretend zeal for Ceremonies and were furious against Dissenters, did pass for good Christians, and true sons of the Church. This false measure hath hardened abundance in their evil ways, mightily cherished and increased vice in the Land. Conformity to Ceremonies hath been a Cloak that hath covered the most filthy abominations. The continuance of them in the Worship of God will be a gratification of the worst Christians, and a grief to the best. A Ceremonious service is apt to corrupt people with sensuality: It is easy to the flesh, not crossing any of its interests. Holiness requires the subjection of the thoughts and imaginations of the heart unto Christ, that we should be pure in thought, word and deed. But a ceremonial worship is only a bodily exercise, which tho it profiteth

little

little (as the Apostle saith) yet it serves to silence natural conscience, and to represent men to imposing Governours as good members of the Church. This is all that sensual men look for, and if they obtain this, they let loose the reins to all excess of riot. How much did sensuality increase, when it was connived at (if not incouraged) and tender conscience, as the only bug-bear, was every where hunted with a full cry? People are regardless of the power of Christianity, when they find that their Superiors are contented with a conformity to the externals of it. The most vicious people cry, The Temple of the Lord, the Church of *England*, to cover their Immoralities. Away then with these mighty Engines of mischief: Let us all chiefly mind and pursue those things which tend most to the promoting the work of Regeneration in the world. If this course be taken, Hypocrites will lose their advantages of seeming religious by zeal for those things wherein Religion doth not consist, and carnal designs and interests that now rend the Churches, and trouble all things, would be defeated and abandoned. Of all things that should most be regarded which qualifieth for heaven; that is holiness. Corbets *Kingdom of God*, Pa. 74. Mat. 5. 8.

Without it there is no entring into that glorious Kingdom. Holiness not only prepares for eternal life, but is greatly advantagious to the Church in this World. 'Wheresoever it is, it invigorates others of this fellowship that are near it, and it commands awe and reverence from all men. Eph. 5. 5. Heb. 12. 14. Ibid. Page 130.

VI. Hindring a world of good. It cannot be proved that Ceremonies in Worship ever did any good. The instances abovementioned fully prove that they have been very Mischievous; and there is this to provoke all good Christians to desire the casting them away, they hinder a world of good. They hinder Reformation, Love and Communion of Churches. VI.

I. They hinder reformation. The Quarrels occasioned by them hinder the Progress of the Reformed Religion. Bishop *Burnet* in relation to *England* chargeth this upon the 'long and fierce contests among us about things which we all confess are indifferent in their own nature. There may yet be expected a further reformation of Churches to a higher degree of purity to the advancement of the power of Godliness. In the Reformation in the last Century the Pope was driven hence in such haste that he left I. *Exhortation to Peace and Union*, Pag. 13.

some

some of his toys behind him. These have continued too long amongst us, to the great disturbance of the Church, and oppression of serious Piety. God by the late advances of Popery among us, hath shewed us what it is, that both it, and all things that belong to it may be abhorred by us, and rejected with indignation. He herein deals with us as he did with the Israelites; *Thou shalt go even to* Babylon, *there shalt thou be delivered.* They were delivered from *Babylon* the most potent Tyranny on Earth in those times, and they were purged from Idolatry in *Babylon*, the Fountain and Nursery of Idolatry then in the World. For they never revolted again to Images after their return from Captivity. But they were afterward guilty of our error, doting on humane Impositions, they set up Traditions by which they made void the Commandments of God. In the first Reformation we were cleansed from Idolatry, in the next I hope we shall go a step further. The case of the Jews and *Babylon* may have a resemblance to the Church and Spiritual *Babylon* now. The Church is prevailing, tho she lately seemed to languish. Her struglings under the renewed assaults of Antichrist tend to her higher advancement. We have been in such danger of destruction by Popery and Arbitrary Power, that our ruine seemed unavoidable. God hath wonderfully rescued us from all the Plagues that seemed to hang over our heads: We should therefore cast off all those things, that by wounding weak consciences may have provoked him to set darkness in our paths, and by dividing us did help to bind us as slaves under the most cruel Tyranny. God may intend this reformation among us, by the glorious revolution he hath wrought, by our Gracious Soveraign, by which the tide of the last persecution from Antichrist seems to be turned, and the Church to be upon the rising ground. Let us then retain nothing that may hinder the good work of God among us. 'That persecution (saith the Learned Mr. *Charnock*) 'which, I suppose, remains yet to be acted, and which will be the 'smartest, shall be succeeded by the clearest eruption of Gospel-'light, wherein the Gospel shall recover its Ancient and Primi-'tive Glory. If he doth suffer enemies to prevail, they shall be 'but as whisks to brush off the dust, wisps of Straw to cleanse the 'filthy pot. Before the *Philadelphian* State (which it is likely we are 'not far from) there will be a combat wherein the Church is to 'bear a signal Testimony to the truths of Christ in the way of a 'conflict,

Mic. 4. 10.

Vol. 2. *on* Psal. 87. 5. Pag. 27.

Ibid. *on* Exo. 15. 9, 10. P. 52. Ibid. *on* Psa. 87. 5. P. 39.

conflict, *Rev.* 3. 5. The glorious State of the Church at the re-
surrection of the witneſſes, ſhall be preceded by ſuch a calami-
ty as ſhall be the terrour of the Godly, and the triumph of an
enemy devoted to a ſudden and unexpected deſtruction, *Rev.* 11.
9, 10, 11, 13.

His going forth is prepared as the morning, Hoſ. 6. 3. His appea- Vol. 2. of
rance for and in his Church, is as certain as the dawning of the Pſal. 87. 5.
morning light at the appointed hour: All the Clouds which Pag. 31.
threaten a perpetual night, cannot hinder it, all the workers
of darkneſs cannot prevent it; this morning will dawn whether
they will or no. There ſhall be a perpetuity in this Spiritual State; Ib. Pag. 40.
only between the beginning and compleating it, *Satan* ſhall be
let looſe: but for a little ſeaſon, *Rev.* 20. 3. And after this the
Church ſhall not have one blow more from Hell; but the Devil
muſt for ever give over nibbling at her heel.

Let us not fight againſt God. All dividing terms of Communion Act. 23. 9.
or of the exerciſe of the Miniſtry, are the things to be removed
in order to a more perfect reformation of the Church, and to make
way for a more holy and bleſſed State of Piety and Love, which
may be at hand, if by our perverſeneſs we do not put away this
happineſs from us. God is doing this work in the world; it ſhall
go on, tho we periſh by our fooliſh obſtinacy. *If it be of God,* ye 5. 39.
cannot overthrow it, leſt haply ye be found even to fight againſt God.
All wiſe and good men amongſt the Clergy and People, deſire the
taking away the inſtruments of our confuſions. None at this time
can have a zeal for theſe things, except ſuch, who either know
not how to appear religious without a dreſs of trifles, or they have
ſuch a ſecret reſerve for the late Kings Intereſt, that they had
rather have an Army of *French* Dragoons, *Iriſh* Cut-throats and
barbarous Highlanders, in the bowels of this Kingdom, than
ſee us ſtrengthened by an Univerſal affection to our gracious
Soveraign, and United in Love and Charity one towards ano-
ther.

Ceremonies have been the Clokes of Impiety and Maliciouſ-
neſs: If theſe are continued it will be exceeding difficult to purge
out vice, which will ſhelter it ſelf under them. People are prone
to be fond of their own Idols, there will be more regard had for
conformity to them, than care of reformation. Tho our Pious
Fathers are never ſo zealous againſt ſin, the Under-Officers will

indulge

Bold. *Plea for moderation*, Pag. 41. indulge the Sons of *Eli*. 'A Regiſter, when told that a perſon 'preſented was one of us, he will ſwear and be drunk as 'well as the beſt of us; called the Church-Warden, and chid 'him very ſharply, telling him he was a moſt impudent and villa-'nous rake-hell, in that he durſt adventure to preſent ſo worthy a 'Gentleman as that was. We are all apt to look on the faults of our own party with a favourable eye. Debauchery came in with Ceremonies, we ſhall be happy if they fall together. *Righteouſneſs exalteth a Nation, but ſin is a reproach to any people*, Prov. 14. 34.

II. II. They hinder love among the people, and between the people and their Miniſters.

I. I. Love amongſt the people is mightily hindred by the diviſions and animoſities cauſed by human Impoſitions. If we look back on our miſerable confuſions, and well conſider how far our diviſions contributed toward the bringing us into them, we ſhall find that theſe Roman Nettles have not been leſs miſchievous to us, than the fiery Serpents were to the *Iſraelites* in the wilderneſs. They were the Rod of God, and directed them to the Brazen Serpent, a Type of him who was to be the healer of the Nations. Our Bigots are for continuing theſe tormentors amongſt us, but provide nothing to heal the wounds they make; they will not (as one ſaid) part with a rag to bind up the bleeding wounds of the Church. The Sons of *Zerviah* cry, The Church of *England*, the Church of *England*, and do moſt endanger it by labouring the preſervation of theſe tools of diſſention, hindring our joining together in the Service of God with one heart and one Soul, and uniting to defend the King and Kingdom againſt the common Enemy. Love is the bond of perfection, and would make us mighty againſt all that hate us, if theſe Incendiaries did not raiſe jealouſies of the Churches danger, it may be with a deſign to maintain a faction among us to make an after-game for the late King.

If we review the method taken, the deſign of and the uſe that hath been made of the re-eſtabliſhment of Ceremonies, we ſhall plainly ſee the wild fire that is in the preſent zeal of our hot-ſpurs. Soon after the Reſtauration, the enemies of Piety, and Vertue reſolved to continue the diviſion between the two moſt potent Intereſts of the Proteſtants in *England*; to further this a ſham-plot was caſt upon the Presbyterians in ſeveral Counties; this was

ſo improved in Parliament that Penal Laws were eaſily obtained to inſlave and deſtroy the Diſſenters. And when thoſe Laws did not ſufficiently purge Pious Miniſters out of the Church, *Clifford* (a Papiſt) moved that they might be ſtab'd with an Oath, which ran like Wild-fire amongſt the Penſioners, and ſo the renunciation of the Covenant was enacted into a Law, which turned out ſome that in their Judgments were for a Liturgy and Epiſcopal Government. The gaining of this point was of ſo great importance to the deſigns of the Popiſh Cabal, that the Parliaments could never obtain the removing of our differences by a Legal Indulgence. When the Parliament voted that the proſecution of Diſſenters was a grievance, and dangerous to the Kingdom, they were ſent home to hear a Libel read againſt them in the Churches and the fire of perſecution raged more than ever. The Court would never part with theſe bombs that were made to Sacrifice both parties to the rage of the Popiſh Conſpirators. Firſt, The Diſſenters were worried and waſted by the moſt violent Perſecutions, inflamed by the ſecret enemies of Religion, and promoted by debauched and perjured Informers. Then in the Church, the moſt Pious and Sober members of it were proſecuted as diſaffected to the Government. The conſpirators who were againſt a Legal indulgence, could afford an Indulgence againſt Law, and that was never thought of, but when the Proteſtant Intereſt was to pay very dear for it. There were but two Declarations of Indulgence: One, when the Dutch were to be rob'd of a vaſt treaſure in their *Smyrna* Fleet, and a War to be made for the deſtruction of the Proteſtant States of *Holland*; the other was deſigned to choak the whole body of the Church of *England* Clergy, who for not reading it in their Churches were to be Sacrificed to *Moloch* by *Jefferies* and his brethren of the Inquiſition. Our *Bigots* muſt have gone to pot with the reſt if God had not inſpired our Gracious Soveraign to expoſe himſelf between us and danger, and yet ſome of theſe men do murmur at the happineſs they enjoy by his goodneſs and courage.

Now, if after we have been all thus well bang'd by theſe tools ſome will have them, and they muſt not be aboliſh't; pray let them be left indifferent; Let him that would have a May-pole, have one; and he that would have none, let him not be obliged to play with a poſt, a poſt that hath almoſt beaten out his brains.

Love can never flouriſh in the Church, if Impoſitions the matter of contention and diviſions in it are continued. The heart-burnings and Schiſms cauſed by them, are chargeable upon the impoſers, who will not ſuffer Chriſtians to enjoy the Ordinances upon the terms appointed by our Lord. 'Eccleſiaſtical Superiors 'are as much concerned to take heed of Schiſmatical Impoſitions, 'as the people are to ſhun Schiſmatical recuſancy and diſobedience.

Corbet, *Kingdom of God.* Pag. 73

II. They hinder love between Miniſters and the People. They beget a diſlike in the Miniſters of their Pariſhioners when they leave the publick Worſhip, and this diſlike grows to ſuch a ſtrangeneſs towards their Neighbours, that they loſe many opportunities of doing them good, which they might do by a free and gentle correſpondence with them. They make the People to deſpiſe us when they ſee us to be fond of things which they know to be trifles. And how can they love us when they have no value for us? We live in a knowing age, people ſee the vanity of thoſe things on which ſome among us place all their zeal, they know that by the diviſions cauſed by them all our miſeries and dangers were let in upon us; and if we ſtill ſtickle for them they will abhor us, believing that we do not care if we bring them back again into all thoſe calamitous confuſions, from which we are ſo lately delivered. Let us not deceive our ſelves; the intereſt of the Clergy of *England* doth not depend on the continuance of Ceremonies, we ſhall gain much more upon the People by caſting them away. They value us only for Piety, Sobriety and Diligence; and where there are ſuch as the Prophet deſcribes, they flock to the Aſſemblies of Diſſenters: they value not their Conformity if they are Drones, or do not Preach ſeriouſly and profitably.

II.

Iſa. 56, 10, 11, 12.

Is it worth the while to continue the things that have driven multitudes from our Communion, and deprived us of many advantages of being uſeful for the good of their Souls? Let us lay aſide all ſtumbling blocks, and labour to the utmoſt of our power to promote ſound knowledge in all our ſeveral Stations; this will engage and fix the love of the People on us. 'When the 'publick order throughly promotes the means of ſound know-'ledge, and encourageth real Godlineſs, it ſatisfies the minds of 'them who juſtly expect in a Goſpel Church and Miniſtry more 'than an outward Form, even the manifeſtation of Truth and 'Spiritual Light, Life and Power; and it prevents their wandring

Corbet, *Kingdom of God.* Pag. 164.

'to

to ſeek after it in the devious paths of Sectaries.

III. They hinder Communion of Churches. We have ſtood at too great a diſtance from other Reformed Churches. Zeal for little things wherein we differ from them, hath made us too little to conſider and value their Intereſts, and hath been a hindrance of the moſt deſireable and advantageous correſpondence with them, for the advancement of the Goſpel in the World. When by the great deliverance from all the badges of our former ſlavery under Antichriſt, we are freed from all unneceſſary terms of Communion, all the Churches of Chriſt will be at liberty to conſult the common Intereſt of Reformed Chriſtianity for the welfare of the Myſtical Body of our Lord. The ſeveral diſtempers of particular Churches may have applications, fit for them according to the advice of other Churches, which will be more impartial in their counſel, than perſons at home; and ſuch advice is ſometimes better received. III.

Thus I have muſtered ſix Regiments of miſchiefs from our Ceremonies; many more might be drawn forth; but I think here is enough to give us a warm alarm, if we are not ſo far blinded as not to ſee the true Intereſt of Chriſtianity, and of Souls; and laid in ſuch a deep ſleep of carnal ſecurity, that nothing, will awaken us.

Let me turn from the warm men to the Pious and Learned Paſtors of the Church.

O my Reverend Fathers, and Brethren, *The Chariots of* Iſrael, *and the Horſemen thereof*; it depends much on your pious Counſels to calm the ſtorms that rage in ſome mens minds, to heal our breaches, and by a Union of all good Proteſtants to make us a terror to our Enemies. Let me ſpeak unto you in the words that *Nehemiah* put up unto God: *Let not all the trouble ſeem little that hath come upon us, on our Kings, on our Princes, and on our Prieſts, and on our Prophets, and on our Fathers, and on all the People* of this Monarchy, ſince a furious Perſecution begun for Ceremonies, ſet all the three Kingdoms in a flame, watered the Fields with Blood, laid many Families and Houſes in ruine, and ended in the Tragical death of *Charles* the firſt. 2 Kings 2. 12. Neh. 9. 32.

The return of theſe inſtruments of miſchief with *Charles* the ſecond, ſet on foot another Perſecution which provoked God to fling us into the hands of a Popiſh Prince, who brought us ſo near

to deſtruction, that we were as a Sacrifice bound on the Altar, ready for the fatal ſtroke; and as the Apoſtle ſaid of his danger in a tempeſt, *all hope that we ſhould be ſaved was then taken away.* Acts 27.20. But God, (whoſe Infinite Wiſdom is never at a loſs to find a way of redemption in the greateſt extremity, and whoſe arm is never ſhortned that it cannot ſave) appeared for us when all help failed, *he raiſed up the righteous man from the* Eaſt, drove away our Enemies before him, as *Duſt and Stubble* is driven away by a Whirl-wind. We for what we brought upon our ſelves, by our Zeal for little things, may be ſaid to have *ſold our ſelves for nought*, yet God *Redeemed us without Money*: Our reſcue from a Wilderneſs of Confuſion, and from the Houſe of Bondage, did not put us to the hundredth part of the charge that our controverted Ceremonies have coſt us. And now, *after all that is come upon us for* our rigour towards tender Conſciences, *ſeeing God hath puniſhed us leſs than our iniquities deſerve, and hath given us ſuch deliverance as this: ſhould we again break his Commandments, and put any ſtumbling-block or occaſion to fall in our brothers way? Would not he be angry with us till he hath conſumed us, ſo that there ſhould be no remnant nor eſcaping?* God who for us Commanded deliverance from the *Eaſt*; can give long wings to deſtruction from the *Weſt*, that it ſhall overtake us ſuddenly when we think leaſt of it. May not judgments hang over our heads, for the murmurings of ſome amongſt us, and the coldneſs of others towards the healing propoſals of Peace among Proteſtants? Is not *Ireland* all on fire? Are there not Enemies armed in *Scotland*? And tho they are now inconſiderable, may not God for our Sins increaſe their Power, and let them into *England*, to turn the point of his avenging Sword againſt our doors? He needs not winds to tranſport Executioners of his wrath, nor long Marches of Forces to bring Deſtruction upon us, he can raiſe up Enemies from among our ſelves, that ſhall do his ſtrange work effectually. If we conſider our want of bowels of compaſſion towards Souls driven from our Communion by Impoſitions, we have reaſon to wonder at the mercy of God in reſtraining the ſecret rage of all men round about us, that they do not in a furious fit cut us in pieces. What a tempeſtuous, unruly Sea is the wickedneſs of all mankind, and what a mighty power is it which binds up the rage of ſo many Devils in fleſh? *The Devil worketh in the Children of Diſobedience.* Eph. 2. 2.

Iſa. 41. 2.

52. 3.

Ezra. 9. 13, 14.

Rom. 14. 13.

All

All men would be such Children if Divine Grace did not make the difference: if it were not for some Principles in the Conscience, and external impediments, all Nations would be mad. The whole Body of mankind is a great Regiment of *French* Dragoons. *France* in its present desolations is a Paradise to what it would be, if God did not *restrain the remainder of wrath.* Instead of devouring Gods Lambs only, they would be Lions and Tygers to one another, filling that Country with Blood and Carcases. And that Kingdom in such confusions would be a Picture of what the whole World would be, if wickedness were every where let loose. The Massacres and Cruelties of any age or place are not to be thought strange: but it is a wonder that all times are not sanguinary, and that all Countreys are not fill'd with Garments rouled in Blood. Dare we be hard towards our Brethren in a World full of furies, that can only be restrained by the Power of God, whom we provoke by offending the weak? The nearer we are to him in profession, the more dreadful will his wrath be upon us for our Sins. How did his anger burn against *Israel?* He did let loose Wild Beasts of Prey to Worry his peculiar People, and to devour the Children of his Friend, suffered the *Wild Boar to waste the Vineyard which his right hand had planted.* Judgment is swift and heavy upon the Sinners in Sion. *You only have I known of all the Families of the Earth, therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.* He is more severe towards his own People for sin, than others that know him not. When he visits the World with his Judgments the first strokes fall upon his Church. The Cup of his fury that was to go round all Nations, began at *Jerusalem.* We who serve in the Sanctuary are more in danger of Plagues for our Male-administration, than other men that are more remote. The men with slaughter-weapons in their hands were Commanded to begin at the Sanctuary. God can provide slaughter-men and slaughter-weapons for us, if we will not be merciful to Conscience. *He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy. The time is come that judgment must begin at the House of God.* How terrible hath this been in former times? *The dead Bodies of thy Servants have they given to be meat to the Fouls of the Heaven, the Flesh of thy Saints unto the Beasts of the Earth. Their Blood have they shed like Water round about* Jerusalem.

Psa. 70. 10.

Psalm 80. 13, 14, 15.

Amos 3. 2.

Jer. 25. 15, &c.

Ezek 9. 6.

Jam. 2. 13. 1 Pet. 4 17.

Ps. 79. 2, 3

If we would avoid all the Plagues that attend Oppressors and Perse-

Perſecutors of Conſcience, we muſt caſt away all Impoſitions, and give the beſt incouragement to them who labour moſt to maintain the power of Godlineſs in themſelves and others.

Bolde of Perſecutior, Pag. 20. 'Thoſe who agree with us in all the Subſtantials of Religion, and 'add no dangerous or deſtructive Tenet to theſe, who are holy, ſober 'chaſte temperate, righteous, compaſſionate and merciful, and 'who no way endeavour to diſturb the publick Peace, but are 'vigorous Proteſtants, and reſolute oppoſers of the common ene-'mies of our Religion, and Civil Rights, they ought (eſpecial-'ly conſidering our preſent circumſtances) to be ſo far from be-'ing Perſecuted and Oppreſſed, as to have all the incouragement 'and countenance that pious Chriſtians, and Loyal Subjects can 'claim and deſerve. If you thus ſupport Piety, and relieve ten-der Conſciences, you ſhall be bleſſed and honoured, and your flocks ſhall flouriſh under your conduct: Clergy and People ſhall be an ornament and ſtrength one to another. *If you undo the hea-*

Iſa. 58. 6. *vy burdens, and let the oppreſſed* (grieved Conſciences) *go free, and*

8 *break every yoke of needleſs Impoſitions: Then ſhall your light break*

11. *forth as the morning, and the glory of the Lord ſhall be your rere-ward.*

12. *He ſhall guide you continually, and ſatisfie your Souls. And you ſhall be called the repairers of the breach, and reſtorers of paths to dwell in.*

When you chiefly mind the Glory of God and the good of ſouls, all your enemies ſhall fall into contempt, and God *ſhall*

Pſa. 37. 6. *bring forth your Righteouſneſs as the light*, notwithſtanding all the obloquy caſt upon you by evil men. Your Enemies ſhall be like chaff driven away. They are but like the ſmall Particles of duſt which continually beat upon us, and are not felt nor diſcerned but in the Sun beams. Millions of theſe are continually agitated about us by the Air in motion; The moſt enraged Enemies of our Church are but breathing duſt moved by the breath of Life,

Jan. 4. 14. which is *but a vapour*. The whole rabble of Antichriſtian furies now in combination againſt us in *England*, *Scotland* and *Ireland*, are but Gods Priſoners in Chains; if he ſuffer them to rattle their fetters about the ears of the faithful, yet they ſhall never be able wholly to deſtroy them: *The gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt*

Ma. 16. 18. *the Church*. The head of the Church, is the Judge of the World, he will not ſuffer his Jail-birds to triumph over his Body.

I have done with the fourth conſideration, the manifold miſ-chiefs

chiefs of these Impositions. I have been long wading through them; but the grief of innumerable tender consciences under the weight of them, hath been longer and very deplorable. Length here cannot be avoided: these little things have caused so many mischiefs, that it is very difficult to speak little of them. I shall now proceed to the last consideration and conclude.

V. The danger that threatens us in the continuance of Ceremonies in the Worship of God. It is hoped that they who do not seriously consider the distress of others, may be awakened with the black prospect of their own danger. We are threatned with a double danger, present and future. V.

I. Our present danger. This may be set forth in three Particulars.

I. The continuance of these things will bring upon us the contempt and hatred of the People. Multitudes in City and Countrey have a Prejudice against us for the late miscarriages of some, and the unseasonable stiffness of others for the things that divide and weaken us, when it concerns us all to be united as one man against the common Enemy. If this temper should prevail, we shall be abhorred by all men, for exposing the publick happiness to the danger of Ruin, only for things of no value, and which we acknowledge to be in their own nature Indifferent. 'It is high 'high time to leave off insisting on little Punctilio's of Honour; we 'ought duly to weigh our circumstances, and the nature of the 'things we contend about, and if our dangers be unmeasurably 'great, and the things we differ about such as will not bear so 'great a weight, as the loss of our Religion and all our Rights, 'we must yield something on either side, and that side must be 'willing to part with most, that can do it with greatest ease, and 'most innocence. The Dissenters doubt of the Lawfulness of some 'of our terms of Communion, and therefore cannot yield to us; 'but we may with ease and innocence condescend to them in quit-'ting Impositions not appointed by God. Bolde. *Plea for Moderation*, Pag. 5.

'Small differences must give place to the greater Points, in 'which we are at one; for all that act otherwise, shew clear-'ly, that tho they do not think it decent to speak out what they 'think, yet in their hearts they undervalue the Common Interest 'of the Protestant Religion in which we agree, but set a real va-'lue upon indifferent matters, and are acted by the heats and a-'nimosities *Bishop* Burners *Exhortation to Peace and Union*, Pag. 11.

'nimosities of a Party, to which all other things give place.

Our Brethren have according to the Act of Indulgence subscribed our Doctrine, and thereby are incorporated into the Church of *England*. The People see by this, that they agree with us in the Substantials of our Religion, and they may account us guilty of Peevishness and Malice if we continue those little things as terms of Communion which we know they cannot comply with. And to do this after our acknowledgements in distress, and a promise of coming to a due temper may make them abhor us as Enemies to our Countrey. 'Tho some of our make-bats, who do wholly imploy their Talents to widen our differences, do pretend to the Church of *England*, I am verily perswaded they are either Real Papists, or very mischievous Instruments in Popish hands, to effect and bring about the common Ruin of Protestants. It cannot be with a good design, that at this time of day, they are Zealous for things that they know will continue a great division amongst us. It is not to be doubted, but that the crossness and secret Practices of some Clergy-men and Priest-ridden Gentlemen: have obstructed affairs in Parliament, hindred the relief of *Derry* to the loss of many Thousand Gallant men: *Ireland* had been in a fair way of recovery, and the Rebellion in *Scotland* had not come to such a head but for such tools. Some of our Guides are more unkind to *England* than Forreigners. The *Dutch* to purchase our liberty, besides the charge of 600000 *l.* ventured a great fleet and a considerable Army, when they might have wanted it themselves: but some among us will not part with a few trifles to save Church and State. Will not such folly and madness bring upon us the contempt and hatred of all men, and make the wise and the good ashamed to own us? The Clergy counting them to be 20000 (which is much too large a reckoning, there not being 10000 Parishes in *England*) are but the 250*th* part of the Nation, supposing the People to be but 5 Millions: and shall 249 souls be exposed to all kind of dangers and miseries for the mad humour of one man? All the pious, sober and moderate Clergy-men are for a Union: the rest are some of them Dignified Drones, these fear contempt if more diligent labourers are admitted into the Church; some are learned, but are inflamed with a Pharisaical Zeal for the form of Godliness, denying the Power thereof; some are debauched, and fear the severe correction

Bolde *Plea for Moderation*. pag. 6.

that

that is due unto them; Some are departed from our Doctrine, and fear (here the shoe pincheth) that their errors will be exposed by the accession of such an Orthodox Interest as the Body of the Presbyterians who are firm to the Doctrine of the Church of *England*. Some are so sottish, that they act their part very ill, and would be undone if their tools were taken away: all our sticklers, are Tantivees for their own humours, and care not what becomes of our Religion, Laws and Liberties. Many of these are the Disciples of Old *Roger*, helped to cry him up, and maintain him as a great Pillar of the Church: with him they Rejoyced in the Invasions that were made upon our Rights, and the Barbarous executions of Protestant Noblemen and Gentlemen in the late times of P[illegible]ery and Arbitrary Popery.

If the Sword should be drawn again in *England*, how severely will this unmercifulness of Clergy-men be revenged upon them, as the cause of all our miseries, by their perverseness for toys? Such troublers of our *Israel*, may expect nothing less than a total extirpation, and that the people will make sure work with a sort of men, that are not content to have once imbroiled the three Kingdoms in a bloody War for indifferent things, but do now take the same methods for the same vanities to make us pass through all those calamities again.

II. Our danger of losing all our lately recovered Rights, if by our divisions we should again let in the common enemy. Popery is a Plot and Conspiracy against all the Interests of mankind, strikes at the foundations of humane Society, and will not suffer men to use their reason and senses, deposeth & assassinates Kings, absolves Subjects from their Allegiance & Dispenseth with the most horrid wickednesses. It is a Religion that loves to lap in humane blood and hath filled the World with Slaughters. Pope *Julius* in seven years was the occasion of the Slaughter of 100000 Christians. The Massacre in *France* in three months cut off a 100000. P. *Perionius* avers that in the Persecution of the *Albingenses* and *Waldenses* 1000000 lost their lives. From the beginning of the Jesuits till 1580 that is, thirty or forty years, 900000 perished, saith *Baldwinus*. The Duke of *Alva* by the hangman put to death 36000. *Virgerius* affirms that the Inquisition in 30 years destroyed 150000. To all this I may add the Irish Rebellion in which

II.

Dr. Moor *Divine Dialogues.* pag. 161.

were destroyed 300000, as the Lord *Orery* reports in a Paper printed in the Reign of *Charles* II.

Tho some new-fashioned Divines have represented Popery in favourable Colours, and endeavoured to clear the Pope from the old charge of being Antichrist; for the bafling of such flattering Doctors, comes the late (and I hope the last persecution from Antichrist) Dragon Persecution in *France*, *Orange* and *Savoy*. This hath out-done all Persecutions both Pagan and Papal that ever were in the World. No Persecution, no nor all the persecutions together contained in them all the barbarities of this. Never any raged to such a high degree of subtilty, malice and cruelty; in this have suffered above 150000, who would heartily have chosen to change a miserable life for death: but life was continued, to load it with longer miseries, and death was denied, as a favour too great for them. Innumerable were the violences that were committed on the Souls, Bodies, and Estates of Protestants.

They grieved the modest Souls of vertuous Women and Maids by hanging them up naked by their feet, or by their arm-pits, thus exposing them to publick view. In Parents they tormented their bowels of natural affection: They bound mothers (that gave suck) unto posts, and let their infants lye in their sight several days, languishing, Crying, Moaning, Gasping for Life; and even dying for Hunger and Thirst, Swearing to them they should not give Suck till they abjured. The new art of waging War against the reason of Christians is a Devilism never practised before; they poured Wine down their throats till the fumes overcame their reason; to destroy their reason for want of sleep, they Dodded, Lashed, Flung them about, threw buckets of water on their faces, made a continual noise upon kettles over their heads and tormented them a 1000 ways. By this many were distracted, and others became mopish and stupid.

All the tragical methods of that persecution, had before this been acted again in *England*, if God had not in mercy sent our Gracious Soveraign to *save us from the Lyons mouth*. Let us remember and consider what hath been done upon others, and let their sufferings be a warning to us, that we give no advantage to our enemies, by continuing any of the instruments that divided and weakened us, brought upon us our late confusions and still threaten

threaten us with danger. A relapse would be a greater evil, than any we have yet had a prospect of: The cruelty of Popery against Hereticks would be raised to a higher degree than ever, by an insatiable thirst of revenge upon us for our insolency in throwing off our Fetters and Chains. All that hath been acted under Paganism and Popery, will be unspeakably short of what we must feel, if we return again to the house of Bondage. Our task will be doubled and trebled, the Fiery Furnace shall be heated seven times hotter than ever, and seventy times too if they can do it.

If after all that we have seen and feared, and others have sadly felt, any amongst us resolve still to sickle for their Toys, it may be said of them as of the *Cabdiuns*: *They are mad upon their Idols.* Jer. 50. 38.

III. Our danger in respect of Gods Judgments which we may bring upon our heads. Tho Popery should never be able to lift up its head again in this Land; yet if we continue in the same course that provoked God to cast us into the late confusions, he can find other plagues to inflict upon us. We know not a heavier plague than Popery, but he can send one that shall be more terrible and destructive. In his Word he speaks mildly to rigorous Governours: *What mean ye that beat my people to pieces?* But he will thunder in his Judgments against them that break his flock to pieces, scattering them from the Communion of his Church by unnecessary impositions. III. Isa. 3. 15.

Tho by the Act of Indulgence the instruments of Persecution are struck out of the hands of Persecutors, yet we may be still guilty of Persecution, if we continue those things that armed evil men against his people, and do still drive his Lambs from their Pastures, and the punishment of persecution may overtake us. 'The black horses, the instruments of the execution of Gods anger, were sent towards *Babylon*, where his people were in Captivity, *Zech. 6. 6.* Their's was only a bodily Captivity, their consciences were free. Are not Gods people now in Spiritual Captivity, when they must not enjoy his Ordinances with us, but upon terms they cannot conform to and he never appointed? Have not we reason to expect that the black horses should be let loose to run swiftly and furiously upon us? By endeavouring to Charnock *Vol.* 2. *on* Exod. 15. 9, 10. pag. 50.

continue our ſtubble we may be oppoſers of God in the great work that he ſeems to be doing for his Church: the advancement of it to a purer and more glorious State. It may be obſerved that generally a glorious ſtate in the Church hath followed her greateſt ſtraits. In *Egypt* when the task was doubled and ſtraw denyed, *Moſes* was ſent, and God delivered his people by ſigns, and wonders, and great terrours. The Jews were without Urim and Thummin, without the Spirit of Propheſy, when Chriſt came in the fleſh to work Redemption. How low was the infant Church when Chriſt was in the Grave, his diſciples all ſcattered? How black the hour, and great the Power of Darkneſs, when the Sun was darkened and the earth trembled? This was followed with the accompliſhment of the great Prophecy that *Japhet* ſhould dwell in the Tents of *Sem*; delivered by *Noah* about two thouſand years before, fulfilled in the raiſing of a Gentile Church. The Church was more glorious after the Pariſian Maſſacre, the perſecution in the *Netherlands* and the *Marian* Flames in *England*. *Hamans* Plot to deſtroy all the Jews, cauſed great mourning, and Faſting, and Weeping amongſt them: But the plotter is hanged on his own Gallows; and the Jews had Light, and Joy and honour. We have reaſon to hope, that after the late Plot for the Extirpation of the Northern Hereſie, and the great Extremity this Church was reduced to, ſhe ſhall now be more beautiful and glorious than ever, if the peeviſhneſs of ſome doth not cauſe a delay of this happineſs. 'The ſharpeſt pangs precede deliverance; it was ſo when Chriſt came in the fleſh, it will be ſo 'at every new riſing of Chriſt in the Spirit. If people did look before them, and conſider the Providence of God, and tendency of things, they would be more indifferent towards Indifferent things; the Divine Power and Jealouſie would cool their blind Zeal for ſuch matters, they would be afraid to oppoſe his work, leſt he ſend upon them that Woe that is denounced againſt them that preſume to *ſtrive with their Maker*. It is a dangerous thing to be found fighters againſt God. 'Gods Counſel 'muſt ſtand, tho all the Kingdoms in the earth ſtood in the way 'thereof; Oh! At what a rate do theſe now run in the way 'of his wrath and vengeance, and to be partakers of the ſame 'plagues with Antichriſt, who yet will not ceaſe, for ſ giving 'their

Deut. 4. 34.

Gen 9. 27.

Eſth. 4. 3. 8. 16.

Charnock, *Vol.* 2. *on* Exod. 15. 9, 10. pag. 46.

Iſa. 45. 9.

Fulfilling of Scripture Part. 3. *conſiderations anent Popery*, p. ult.

'their power to support that accursed and falling interest! This is not at all to be accounted strange, that men should walk contrary to God, and oppose him; there were always such as did set themselves against his work in the World, and there are now Children of *Belial* (all zealous for Ceremonies to a man) that murmur against their own happiness bestowed upon them by God in bringing about the most wonderful revolution that ever was. We have the less reason to admire this stubbornness in man, because the Devil, a subtle Spirit, and knows that his opposing God will increase his future misery, yet he is so blinded with malice that he always wageth War against his Creator and Judge. 'It is an astonishment, that the Devil after so long an 'experience should be such a fool as to engage in new attempts 'when he hath found so little Success in the former, and hath 'had so many ages to witness the battles he hath received; what 'a fool is he to think that the defender of the Church should be 'conquered by a revolted angel, that lies under an everlasting 'curse? This should make us all to suspect our selves, when we are warm for things that are not appointed by God, and are stumbling-blocks to many pious Christians: It is much better to fear to offend the weak, than to run rashly on, lest we be found to walk contrary unto God, and provoke him to walk contrary unto us. He hath many plagues for them that do so: After many Judgments, he tells the *Israelites* that he *will punish them seven times more for their sins.* And if they still *walk contrary unto him*, he saith again: *I will bring seven times more Plagues upon you, according to your sins.* The like also, *v.* 24. And if yet they *walk contrary unto him*: he saith: *I will walk contrary unto you in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins.* Here are 28 degrees of punishment which number he can mount much higher for the Chastisement of them, who after manifold experience of our Confusions and miseries occasioned by quarrels about trifles, will yet for them walk contrary unto him. There have been innumerable Judgments executed in the world, and Judgments recorded in the Word of God, and there are also unwritten plagues reserved for his obstinate enemies: *Every Sickness, and every Plague which is not written in the Book of this Law, them will the Lord bring upon thee, until thou be destroyed.* But if after many methods of severity

Charnock, *Vol.* 2. *in* Pf. 87. 5. p. 26.

Lev. 26. 18

21.

27.

28.

Deut. 28. 61.

Ezek. 38. 18. Isa. 47. 3. Am. 4. 11, 12. rity people will continue perverse, *his fury shall come up in his face; he will take vengeance, and will not meet him as a man*, but as a God. *Yet ye have not returned unto me, saith the Lord. Therefore thus will I do unto* Israel: *and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O* Israel.

II. II. Our future danger from the continuance of Ceremonies, and that in respect of the account we must give to our Judge. Honour, Plenty and Ease may harden the hearts of some of us against tenderly considering the danger of Souls excluded from our Communion, and thereby exposed as a prey to Sectaries: but all the glory and pleasure of this world will be contemptible when Mat. 24. 30. *the sign of the Son of man shall appear in heaven.* His glory at mid- Acts 26. 13. *day* was unto *Paul a light from heaven above the brightness of the Sun.* That sign may be such a glory filling the whole World with the brightness thereof, every where seen by amazed mankind. He who hath created the glorious body of the Sun, which is 139 (some say 166) times bigger than this Globe in which we live, can spread a more Glorious Light over this point of earth or particle of dust, for so it is if compared with the vast extent of the Heavens. Whatever that sign shall be, it is like it shall be visible to all, not only to the righteous for their comfort, but also to the Mat. 24. 30. wicked for their terrour. It is said that *all the tribes of the Earth* Gen. 49. 5. *shall then mourn.* They of the Tribe of *Levi* who are for *instruments of Cruelty* shall have their share in the mourning. What 1 Thes. 1. 16, 17. trembling will seize upon them, when the mighty blast of Gods Trumpet shall awake all the Sleepers in the dust, them that have 1 Cor 15. 52. not lodged six days in the Grave, and the Sleepers of 6000 years. His power shall raise all the dead, and change the living *in a moment, in the twinkling of an Eye.* An universal flame shall embrace the heavens and the earth (the God of our proud and covetous 2 Pet. 3. 10. Formalists,) melt the frozen World in the *Laodicean* State. *The Heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the Elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall* Rev. 20. 12. *be burnt up. The dead small and great shall stand before God to be judged according to their works.* Then mocking *Ishmaels* that have scoffed at the pure in heart as Puritans, Precise Fools, and Melancholy dull Souls; shall take the Fools cap unto themselves, Wisd. 5. 'and they repenting, and groaning for anguish of Spirit, shall say

'within

'within themselves, This was he whom we had sometimes 'in derision, and a proverb of reproach. We fools accounted 'his life madness, and his end to be without honour. How is he 'numbred among the Children of God, and his Lot is among the 'Saints!

Some among us are angry with *Calvin* for calling humane rites *tolerabiles ineptias*. They will not at the great day be such unto rigorous Imposers, who made them terms of Communion. How will you at that day lift up your faces before your Master and your Judge, when he shall demand of you, What is become of those his Lambs which you drove into the Wilderness by needless Impositions? He requires you to pray unto the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth more labourers into his harvest, and you keep away many worthy labourers from his work, because they cannot comply with terms that he never appointed. We may think it a light matter to offend weak Christians, but it will not be always so: *Wo unto the World because of offences: For it must needs be that offences come: but wo unto that man by whom the offence cometh.* Offences will hereafter be as heavy to the Imposers of humane inventions, as they are now to the weak. The punishment of them that offend one of Christs little ones will be more dreadful than being cast into the Sea with a millstone about the neck. If, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels, shall be the lightest punishment inflicted on them that feed not the hungry, and do not cloath the naked; how deep will their lodging be in the lake of Fire and Brimstone, who lay Stumbling-blocks before multitudes of Souls to their so great Scandal, that they forsake the Ordinances of Jesus Christ? how terrible will it be to be *punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power?* This will be heavier than many Millstones: For all the works and Mountains in the world will be light in comparison of the weight of the wrath of the Lamb. The ravening Wolves that have worried Christs Flock, the great Clerks that have troubled Church and State with their stiffness for very little things, the mighty *Nimrods* that have desolated the earth, shall in vain cry for a covering to the frighted and flying Mountains, and the molten Rocks, that could not save

Epist. Anglis Framford. p. 98.

Mat. 18. 7.

Luk. 17. 2.

2 Thes. 1. 9.

save themselves from the power of the Judge, *who made the*
Rev. 6. 14, 15, 16, 17. *Heaven to depart as a scroll when it is rolled together. And the Kings of the Earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief Captains, &c. hid themselves in the Dens, and in the Rocks of the Mountains; and said to the Mountains and Rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the Throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?*

FINIS.